



The road to Regensburg

Historic town dates back to Stone Age

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You take a conglomeration of buildings founded in 179 during the reign of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, located next to a scenic river, provide a Gothic cathedral with magnificent spires that are visible for miles, and sprinkle in several historic structures including a medieval stone bridge still in use.

Add to that restaurants renowned just as much for their food as their centuries-old histories, and many modern conveniences including shopping malls, and it's beginning to look a lot like the nearby city of Regensburg, Bavaria.

A day trip to Regensburg, which has a population of 150,000 and dates back to the Stone Age, is a trip well worth taking. Located directly off Autobahn 3, it's easy to get to.

Take the University exit off the Autobahn, make two quick right turns, and head for the Zentrum (city center).

The city is a remarkable combination of the old and the new. Less than 10 minutes from the exit, you will find yourself in the heart of a beautiful place.

The city center parking garage is a convenient location to park. Before exiting the garage, not the large section of the historic outer wall of the Roman Castra Regina (photo 6), the home post of the Third Italic Legion, built shortly after the founding of the city.

The renowned Regensburg Historisches Museum (photo 2) is just across the street from the garage.

With several Roman columns on the front lawn, you will see a wonderful collection of Roman weapons, coins and armor, as well as many other impressive collections.

A short walk towards the river will lead you to the Portia Praetoria (photo 1), one of the original gates and guard towers of the castle. With typical European usefulness, the historic arch and tower are part of a newer structure being used as office space.

Going through the gate, you will find yourself at the Bischoffhof, one of the finer historic restaurants in the city.

Continue several blocks further to get a view of one of the world's most famous rivers—the Danube, also known as the Donau. It provides much in the way of entertainment, including boat rides that highlight city sites or a trip to Valhalla, a dramatic German 'hall of fame' immortalizing those who made major contributions to German culture. The round trip boat excursion is 7 Euros for adults. Children's tickets are a reduced price with those under 5 riding for free. The Danube also offers a swimming area and canoe rentals (photos 3, 7).

A gaze up the river gives an impressive view of one of the city's many medieval marvels—the legendary Steineren Bruecke (Stone Bridge) erected between 1135 and 1146 (main photo).

Remarkable in its simplicity and awesome in its presence, the bridge served as a model for many bridge projects worldwide, including the Charles Bridge in Prague.

Practically at the foot of the bridge is the Schricker Historische Wurstkuechen (photo 8). This restaurant is at the heart of a long-standing argument between Regensburg and Nuremberg, about 60 miles down the road, concerning which city has the oldest bratwurst restaurant.

That argument aside, any restaurant that has been in business for more than 500 years specializing in the German sausage delicacy is definitely worth a visit ... or two. Patrons can enjoy good food and beer and a view while sitting on the banks of the Danube.

Another must-see while is the majestic twin spires of the Dom, St. Peter's Cathedral (photo 4), located in the center of the Altstadt.

This impressive Gothic structure, begun in the 1280s, is something that will call to you the moment you see the towers. English brochures with many interesting facts about the cathedral are available inside the church.

City tours of Regensburg can be booked just outside the church. As is generally the case in this city, the new and the old blend beautifully to satisfy every visitor's fancy. Modern shopping and the latest fashions are available within 100 meters of the Dom.

The city center offers something to satisfy every palate, from sushi and Italian to Mexican and German cuisine. To top off a great meal, the famed Erste Bayerische Dampfnudel Backerei is nearby and serves a wide variety of desserts and coffee.

And for visitors who don't mind the crowds, Regensburg festivals include its summer Burgerfest June 22-24 and the Christmas Festival in December.

Whether you decide to enjoy the warm weather festivities or the scenic holiday fun, these are two of the endless highlights of this historic city.

